

STATEMENT OF  
BRIGADIER GENERAL EDWIN J. ARNOLD, JR.  
ON HIS NOMINATION TO BE  
PRESIDENT AND MEMBER OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION

BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS  
UNITED STATES SENATE

SEPTEMBER 21, 2001

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear before you as the nominee for president and member of the Mississippi River Commission.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a brief statement about the Mississippi River Commission, the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project, and my qualifications for the position for which I have been nominated.

The Mississippi River Commission, established by Act of Congress on June 28, 1879, consists of seven members, all of whom are appointed by the President of the United States subject to confirmation by the Senate. Three members are Corps of Engineers officers, one of whom serves as president; one member is from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and three members are from the civilian sector, two of whom must be civil engineers.

From its inception in 1879, the Commission has been charged with the task of planning and implementing a program of flood damage reduction projects and navigation improvements on the Mississippi River. More recently, project purposes have been expanded to include environmental restoration. This task continues to be conducted in concert with the myriad of political institutions, individuals, and public entities which have major interests in seeing that the water resources needs and

opportunities of the Mississippi Valley are evaluated, planned, designed, constructed, and maintained.

As established in 1879, the Commissioners were to serve as advisors in planning and implementing water resource projects and programs on the Mississippi River between the Head of Passes below New Orleans to its headwaters. Since 1928, the Commission has focused on the Mississippi River and Tributaries project, authorized by the Flood Control Act of May 15, 1928, to be implemented under oversight of the Commission. The MR&T project extends generally from the confluence of the Ohio River to the Head of Passes below New Orleans and covers portions of seven states. It receives water from all or portions of 31 states and part of two Canadian provinces, or roughly 41 percent of the contiguous United States. Effective planning, design, construction, and operation of the widespread and complex MR&T project have been assisted greatly by the Commission's active consultation with the public, particularly on its semiannual lower Mississippi River inspection trips, and by the high degree of professionalism that has been developed in its staff.

A major flood on the lower Mississippi River would have catastrophic effects on the inhabitants of the Mississippi Valley and the economy of the nation were it not for the protection provided by the levees and other flood control works along the main stem of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers.

Many have noted that the comprehensive project on the lower river provided for passage of major floods in 1973, 1983, 1997, and other years without the extensive damage suffered in the upper river area during the 1993, 1995, and 2001 flood events.

In addition, the navigation features of the project help to maintain the river for shipping import and export commodities between inland ports and world markets.

Reorganization of the Corps of Engineers in April 1997 placed the entire length of the Mississippi River within one Division of the Corps of Engineers. I serve as Commander of this Mississippi Valley Division of the Corps. Command of the Division office traditionally has also included duties as President of the Mississippi River Commission. The reorganization of the Corps now allows management of the Mississippi River as a single and unified system and enables the President and members of the Commission to more effectively serve as advisors to the Chief of Engineers as authorized in the 1879 legislation.

The Commission members have been active as advisors to the Corps on the Upper Mississippi River since the reorganization in 1997. The Commission has conducted inspection trips on the Upper Mississippi River in August of 1997-2001, holding a series of public meetings in the St. Paul, Rock Island, and St. Louis Districts each year, in addition to the semiannual inspection

trips and public meetings in the Memphis, Vicksburg, and New Orleans Districts.

In regard to my personal qualifications, I am a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin where I was commissioned in 1972 into the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. I hold both a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology and a Master of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. I am also a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, School of Advanced Military Studies, and the Army War College.

Since September 2000, I have served as Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division and also as president designee of the Mississippi River Commission. In this position, I have led and managed the Corps' water resources program in the Mississippi River Valley. The boundary of the Mississippi Valley Division extends from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, includes portions of 12 states, and encompasses 370,000 square miles. The program and activities overseen by the Mississippi Valley Division and Mississippi River Commission are conducted by district offices located in St. Paul, Rock Island, St. Louis, Memphis, Vicksburg, and New Orleans.

I have served over 29 years in the uniformed military service as an Army Engineer. I have commanded at all levels from platoon through Division. I served as Resident Engineer,

U.S. Army Engineer Division, Europe, with duty in Athens, Greece. I was the Battle Lab Director and Deputy Commandant at the U.S. Army Engineer School, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, before I assumed command of the Southwestern Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Dallas, Texas, my last tour of duty before being assigned to my current command of the Mississippi Valley Division of the Corps of Engineers, with its headquarters located in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

In my role as Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division, I have responsibility for Federal involvement in the areas of flood protection, navigation, and environmental preservation along the Mississippi River. I directly supervise the programming and expenditure of Federal resources through the Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works budget within the Mississippi River Valley. My knowledge of the various programs and my daily involvement with constituent groups throughout the valley make me well qualified for the position of President and member of the Mississippi River Commission.

If confirmed to the position, Mr. Chairman, I would look forward to playing a key role in the continual improvement of the Mississippi River system and the Mississippi River and Tributaries project by applying the most modern practices in water resources engineering. I would also look forward to being the President of a Commission that focuses not only on the

traditional roles of safely passing the Mississippi River Basin floodwaters to the Gulf of Mexico, plus providing a safe and dependable navigable waterway, but also incorporates programs and projects for environmental protection and restoration.

Mr. Chairman, for your information, I have attached my complete biography. This completes my prepared statement, and I would be pleased to respond to any questions.